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## EDUCATIONAL NEWS AND EDITORIAL COMMENT

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### THE JOHNS HOPKINS STUDIES IN EDUCATION

The Johns Hopkins University announces the establishment of a new publication entitled "The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Education." This publication will include monographs presenting the results of investigations conducted at the University or elsewhere which, because of their importance, should appear as separate units and at once. The "Studies in Education" are edited by Professor Edward F. Buchner, with the co-operation of Dr. C. Macfie Campbell, and published by the Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, Maryland.

*The Correlation of Abilities of High-School Pupils* (100 pp.) by Dr. David Emrich Weglein, and *Experimental Study of Motor Abilities of Children in Primary Grades* (62 pp.) by Dr. Buford Jennette Johnson, Nos. 1 and 2, respectively, of the "Studies," have just appeared.

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### THE GARY SYSTEM IN NEW YORK UNDER FIRE

The recent election in New York appears ominous for the Gary system inaugurated under Mayor Mitchell's administration. Hylan, the successful Tammany candidate, very frankly made the experiment a campaign issue, attempting to foment opposition among the more ignorant classes of citizens. The extreme pettiness of the prejudice stirred up is illustrated by the exclamation of a German-American mother, "We want our kinder to learn mit der book, der paper, und der pencil, und not mit der sewing und der shop." Stupidity of this sort is supplemented by stirring up the children themselves, who object, even with school riots, to remaining one hour longer in school. To indicate the depths of contemptible opposition to which have sunk men who ought to know better, we may cite the argument often made by stump speakers that the Gary system is intimately associated with Judge Gary, of the steel corporation. This false statement was used to induce the belief that the Gary system of schools is foisted upon the working classes as some additional form of exploitation in favor of the moneyed class. When the campaigners did present anything like creditable opposition,

they seized upon schools which had made the experiment in untoward circumstances, or which, because of lack of equipment, had been compelled to give the system a half-trial.

We are for the moment making no attempt to defend the Gary system as suitable for New York City. However, an interesting feature frequently brought out in the campaign is the almost unanimous approval of the principals and teachers who have conducted the work. Assembly room, library, gymnasium, swimming-pool, playgrounds, laboratories, shops, and many other features of school equipment are making their impression on the educational staff. They are realizing, even if ignorant parents fail to see, that a school must be a place in which pupils live as well as learn, must be a place in which children come in contact with educational values through participation in miniatures of life-activities as well as through books. It is this central feature of the Gary system, certainly in line with the most progressive educational thought of the day, that every friend of progress would grieve to see swallowed up as one delicate morsel by Tammany.

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#### CURRENT PRACTICE IN CITY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

In the convenient form of government *Bulletin*, 1917, No. 8, of the United States Bureau of Education, data are presented concerning the current practices in school administration of cities of over 25,000 population. In cities having between 25,000 and 100,000 population the number of board members ranges from 3 to 21, median 7. In cities of over 100,000 the range is between 4 and 46 with the median 9. Following is the distribution:

|           |           |          |            |
|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|
| 1 city    | 4 members | 1 city   | 14 members |
| 11 cities | 5 "       | 4 cities | 15 "       |
| 3 "       | 6 "       | 1 city   | 21 "       |
| 8 "       | 7 "       | 1 "      | 30 "       |
| 9 "       | 9 "       | 1 "      | 46 "       |
| 5 "       | 12 "      |          |            |

The bulk of American cities show the following practices:

1. Of the boards 79 per cent are elected, 16 per cent appointed by mayor, 5 per cent by council or commission.
2. Only 11 per cent of the cities retain the system of election or appointment by wards.
3. Median tenure of office is four years.

4. Only 15 cities compensate their school-board members; in many of these cases the amount is small. San Francisco, a notable exception, pays its four commissioners \$3,000 each.

5. It is the general practice for the school board to refer new items of business to committees. This plan is followed by 37 of 39 cities of over 100,000 and 104 of 121 cities between 25,000 and 100,000 population. The average number of standing committees is five; the median number of members per committee three.

6. The city treasurer acts for the school board in 31 cities over 1,000,000, and in 76 of those below.

7. In the selection of teachers in cities over 100,000: in 9 cities the superintendent appoints; in 17 he recommends; in 9 he nominates either one teacher or a list; in 2 he has equal voice with a committee. In cities below 100,000: in 53 cities superintendent recommends to a committee; in 35 he nominates; in 23 he appoints; in 16 he advises; in 1 he has no power; in 1 he passes on qualifications.

8. Probationary periods for teachers are common: 29 out of 39 cities reporting mention this provision; 16 cities have probation periods of one year; 7, three years; 4, two years; 1, five months; 1, four months. Of 129 cities over 100,000, 70 provide for probationary appointment; 13, less than 1 year; 38, one year; 10, two years; 7, three years; 2, four years.

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### NIGHT SCHOOLS

In spite of, possibly because of, the fact that many thousands of men have been summoned into military service, never before has a November reported such nation-wide interest in night schools. Two classes of adult citizens seem to be drawn by the need of additional training: first, the women of the land who are taking to heart the conservation program of Mr. Hoover's department; secondly, the young men and women not yet directly in the national service who feel the need of being additionally prepared for the demands and opportunities of the next few years.

A ringing editorial in the *Dayton (Ohio) Journal* admirably expresses the spirit that lies back of the far-spread advance upon the opportunities of the night school. Under the title, "Dayton Going to School," the *Journal* says:

Announcement that attendance at the Dayton night school is now two thousand, the largest in the history of the institution, is most encouraging. It indicates a healthful desire on the part of those whose youthful elementary education has been curtailed to make up for the deficiency; but, of even greater importance, it suggests that the public in Dayton is desirous of co-operating

heartily with the national government in its repeatedly expressed admonition that, at least during the period of the war, every individual who possibly can do so should fit himself for advanced and varied service.

There is at present no means of knowing what service may be required of any of us, or what knowledge may be of value to us individually and to the government later on. It may be needed before the war ends or it may be incidental to the restoration of peace when America certainly will marshal its vast industrial armies.

In any event the schooling can do no one harm whether the government does or does not find a need for our services along the new line of preparation. Knowledge gained in the night school has spelled success for many an individual. It means better employment, higher pay, more happiness, a greater appreciation of the good things of life, and a life of greater usefulness.

Three facts stand out most clearly. A very large majority of night-school students are adults. In Fargo, North Dakota, a small city, out of 320 enrolled in one school 277 are twenty-one years of age or more. The night school is distinctly an adult school. The second fact is the intense practical nature of the work. Typewriting, stenography, chemistry, bookkeeping, French, manual training, higher mathematics, predominate. In short, trade or vocational training of an intensified character makes up the bulk of the curriculum. The third fact is that our foreign-born citizens appear to be most eager for the opportunities. Salt Lake reports in one night school of 200 registration 35 different nationalities. Naturally English for this group is the most widely popular study. Our night schools are one of the means by which we can point forward the civilization of our many races into one race. Moreover, the country over, cities are emphasizing the fact that the extension classes are part of their response to the needs of the hour. As Grand Rapids, Michigan, aptly puts it, the night schools opened, "responding to an appeal from Uncle Sam." For 1916 there are records of 1,700 towns and cities, representing every state in the Union, which maintained night classes. For 1917 the word comes from Washington that "the opening of this year's classes is accompanied by every indication of greatly increased attendance and a material betterment of the results already obtained through this stupendous educational campaign."

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#### SAVE THE SOCIAL CENTERS

The *Chicago Evening Post* prints the following argument in favor of social centers:

Doubtless the school board finds the problem of fuel supply as difficult of solution as it is proving to everybody else, but the plan of the chief engineer

to economize by closing up the school social centers is of very questionable expediency, to say the least.

The social center is quite as useful and necessary a factor in our community life as the school itself, and at no time were its activities more desirable than now. The task in which the nation is engaged requires that we shall not merely conserve but extend in every possible way all agencies that foster the community spirit and contribute to intelligent, contented citizenship. Never have men and women needed the sense of fellowship, of common interest, and the opportunity to express it more than they do today.

The school is the natural rallying-place for the neighborhood. It belongs to the people. Beneath its roof all racial, social, and creedal distinctions are merged in the commonality. There is no other institution of which this is true. To close the social centers would be a sin against the democracy for which we are fighting, a blow at the morale of our people, a subversion of community efficiency at the time when it is vital to maintain efficiency.

As the social center has developed in Chicago's schools, under the direction of men and women of vision and social spirit, it has become far more than a neighborhood recreational opportunity. It is an educational agency of greatest value. It is a promoter of intelligent patriotism, an antidote for disloyalty and sedition. It cultivates Americanism. Close the social centers and you extinguish so many fires beneath the great melting-pot of our heterogeneous citizenship; you check the fusing process so essential to the strength of our national life.

Much of self-sacrificing labor has gone into the building up of the social centers in Chicago schools. No labor has been more fruitful for good. The undoing of this excellent work is not to be considered while there is any other way to meet the emergency. Chicago needs it and the nation needs it. Thousands of men and women, boys and girls, will suffer hardship if deprived of its advantages. The school board should instruct its chief engineer to discover some less costly method of economizing.

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#### SCHOOL BUILDINGS BELONG TO THE PUBLIC

From Denver comes the cheering word that Superintendent Cole has convinced the Board of Education that school buildings belong to the public and are capable of serving the public in the evening as well as during the day. Many a school board has been reluctant to allow gatherings of citizens the free use of school buildings. Forsooth light and heat and janitor services for night meetings often might amount to a serious consideration. At the present moment this condition is threatening the well-established social centers of Chicago. In some communities a sensible procedure might be to charge bare expenses; but it seems incredible to think that a municipality cannot afford to provide free of cost suitable gathering-places. Parks and playgrounds

are part of our municipal programs for maintaining the health of our people. By what stretch of logic is it possible to deny the need for the same purposes of municipal halls and lyceums? Far from being discouraged in the desire to utilize school plants, citizens should be urged to make use of their own property, the public schools. No new building should be erected unprovided with an easily accessible, comfortably furnished public meeting-place. As in Denver, any reputable body of citizens ought to be able to petition for the use of the auditorium. In that city three taxpayers, who become guarantors for the safe-keeping of public property, apply for the hall. An assistant superintendent of schools approves the petition, or rejects it, upon suitable grounds. Denver has gone the limit of liberality, extending to her people the use of these public halls free of expense.

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#### WAR SAVING ON METHOD OF ORDERING TEXTBOOKS

Earlier ordering of school textbooks by boards of education offers a fruitful field for saving in war time, according to Henry P. Kendall, of the Plimpton Press. If school boards can arrange to adopt school texts before January first, asserts Mr. Kendall, instead of waiting until the end of the school year in June, a large saving in the bookbinding trade will result. Ordering school textbooks earlier in the year will, it is declared, help to regularize employment in the schoolbook trade, making uniform hours of work and rates of pay possible throughout the year. In one plant at the present time the hours of labor so vary between winter and summer that, on a basis of 100 per cent as the flat weekly wage, operators during the summer months, because of overtime, earn about 130 per cent and during the winter months about 60 per cent. The workers are obliged to work very long hours in the summer time and to go without vacations.

Earlier ordering of schoolbooks will also conserve human energy, because it will make it possible to run a factory with a minimum number of employees; it will save machinery, because less will be required to produce; and it will save coal in conserving the heat, light, and power. Furthermore, the efficiency of the plant can be greatly increased where work is uniform in quantity, and the cost of production is much less in a plant where the product is produced more uniformly. As a result of Mr. Kendall's suggestion the Commissioner of Education has written to every city school board in the country asking whether it will not be possible hereafter to order schoolbooks before the first of January.

## SUPERVISED STUDY

Questionnaires submitted to high-school pupils are always of doubtful value. W. M. Proctor, of Leland Stanford Junior University, has collected replies from 1,661 pupils of the Pacific Coast, who indicate that they spend an average of 95 minutes a day in school study and 68 minutes a day in home study. Apparently these data were derived from schools few of which maintain any form of supervised study. Mr. Proctor then undertook to canvass the schools which provided for a lengthened school day and resulting supervised study periods. Replies were received from 42 schools; 31 report the lengthened period divided as follows:

|            |     |                 |        |              |    |
|------------|-----|-----------------|--------|--------------|----|
| (a)        | 60' | period, divided | 30-30, | No. of cases | 3  |
|            | 60' | "               | "      | 35-25,       | "  |
|            | 60' | "               | "      | 40-20,       | "  |
|            | 60' | "               | "      | 45-15,       | "  |
|            | 63' | "               | "      | 33-30,       | "  |
|            |     |                 |        |              | 21 |
| (b)        | 70' | "               | "      | 40-30,       | "  |
|            | 70' | "               | "      | 35-35,       | "  |
|            |     |                 |        |              | 6  |
| (c)        | 80' | "               | "      | 40-40,       | "  |
|            |     |                 |        |              | 1  |
| (d)        | 85' | "               | "      | 45-40,       | "  |
|            |     |                 |        |              | 2  |
| (e)        | 90' | "               | "      | 45-45,       | "  |
|            |     |                 |        |              | 1  |
| Total..... |     |                 |        |              | 31 |

Of the remaining eleven schools six employ a study coach; two have special conference periods, where teachers meet all the pupils who are taking work under them for help and direction in their studies, and three have some special method of administering the Study Hall.

Testimony of principals is somewhat divided, though generally favorable to the plan: 26 principals said that study habits have been improved; 2 said that only the slow students have been helped, while the brighter ones have not; 22 said that home study has been greatly reduced; 4 could see no change; 25 said that pupils and teachers co-operated heartily; several said that teachers talked too much during the study periods. Mr. Proctor continues:

Wherever the plan had been in use long enough to make possible the compiling of statistics as to the effect of supervised study on scholarship there was practically unanimous agreement that the number of failures had been reduced and the standards of scholarship had been raised. The high school at Snohomish, Washington, reports that the average percentage of failures in elementary algebra for the two years prior to the adoption of supervised study was 28 per cent. But for the two-year period following the adoption of super-



vised study the failures in the same subject were reduced to 17 per cent. Hoquiam, Washington, reports that the average marks of the students range 10 per cent higher and that the number of honor pupils has been doubled since supervised study was introduced. The principal of the Arcata high school, California, reports that the average mark of the Freshman class has been raised from 78 per cent to  $82\frac{1}{2}$  per cent during the first year of supervised study. Santa Cruz, California, comparing the year 1914-15, the last under the old plan, with the year 1916-17, the second year under supervised study, finds that the increase in the total number of high marks has been 157 per cent, the decrease in low marks 230 per cent, and the decrease in failures 188 per cent. Reno, Nevada, reports a decrease of 45 per cent in the number of failures and an increase of 24 per cent in the number of students making excellent marks.

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### THE RAPID-ADVANCEMENT CLASS

In the September issue of *Educational Administration and Supervision* Miss Eva L. Mulrey, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, describes a method by which the schools of that city make provision for the rapid advancement of specially gifted pupils. A combination group of fourth, fifth, and sixth grades receives pupils from the third; a combination group of sixth, seventh, and eighth receives pupils from the fifth. The two combination groups are not tried in the same district in any one year. From all the fifth grades of any one district the group of thirty pupils are selected, and upon them their rare opportunities are impressed. Miss Mulrey says: "These children are of necessity as nearly perfect, physically, mentally, and morally, as we can imagine. No child is admitted who is not 'A-1' in conduct. He may not be perfect in arithmetic, but he may excel in English. He may not spell correctly every word, but he may do excellent work in history."

The course of study which is given rapid-advancement classes is characterized by the comparative absence of drill. Little drill is necessary because the children are very quick to see, to comprehend, and to retain. Incidentally this fact brings home the enormous waste of time for bright pupils who keep pace in grade promotions with their slower fellows. A second feature of the curriculum is the elimination of what Miss Mulrey calls "frills." Music, manual training, and drawing are given little prominence. Nature-study is correlated with geography, physiology with hygiene and science, and all of these courses supply abundant opportunities for exercises in oral and written expression. The special group is kept together for two years, thus passing from the fifth grade to the first year of high school in two years.

The experiment is interesting and will bear observation. At present it seems not unfair to say that the rapid-advancement class, with its difficulties of administration, with its resultant hard feelings and heart-aches, with its depressing effect of loading upper grades with slow pupils, is but a cumbersome device. The saving of one year for the brighter pupils, or even two years by semiannual promotions, or, still better, by promotions at unstated intervals, appears to be a much more sensible program. However, the motives of economy of time for pupils and economy of teaching energy are so necessary of attainment that experiments to secure these ends ought to be multiplied.

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#### CO-OPERATION WITH LATIN-AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

One inevitable result of the world-war will be a closer drawing together of North and South America, the various nations realizing that America for Americans must be ever more vigorously maintained. Early this year a committee of the American Association of University Professors sent a letter to fifty-nine universities of the United States and to twenty universities of Latin America proposing the establishment of exchange professorships, the establishment of fellowships, and a program of scientific co-operation between the institutions of the two Americas.

Although the war has for the moment introduced an element of uncertainty in university finances, seven institutions in the United States have signified their readiness to co-operate next year. The University of Illinois has established an exchange assistantship with Chile; the University of Indiana, a docentship open to all Latin America. Leland Stanford Junior and Clark universities offer liberal scholarships, while many other institutions promise to give special consideration to applicants of merit from South America.

Up to the present, shortness of time has allowed plans to be formulated by only four institutions in the other America. The National University of Chile, the University of Buenos Aires, the University of Tucuman, and the University of Honduras all welcome the proposal with gracious thoughts of compliance. The committee of the Association of University Professors through its chairman, Mr. L. L. Rowe, modestly referring to the at present scanty results, expresses a hope that the proposals may not be allowed to languish. It is indeed fitting that the leading institutions of learning in the twin Americas shall at once begin to promote acquaintance and cement the friendships among all nations of the Western Continent.